

**MARCH 3, 2004**

**SCHAKOWSKY WELCOMES PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA TO WASHINGTON**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today welcomed members of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) to Capitol Hill. Schakowsky applauded the veterans for their dedication and for coming to Washington to advocate on behalf of their colleagues for critical issues like veterans health care and benefits.**

**"When you signed up for service, you were promised health care, not a six month wait. You were promised disability benefits if you were injured and pension benefits when you retired-- not one or the other. You were promised a number of basic, decent things in payment for your service. Instead the Bush Administration has given you run-arounds, bait and switches, and constant battles," Schakowsky said.**

**Schakowsky added, "Men and women who fought for their country should not have to fight their own government for veterans' benefits they were promised and have fully earned. By introducing a sham budget, the President is trying to tell us that we don't have enough money for veterans' health care-- that we're going to fall even further behind in care for our veterans than we already are."**

**Schakowsky also thanked the PVA for supporting her legislation, HR2353, The Inclusive Home Design Act. H.R. 2353 is based on the concept of visitability, an affordable, sustainable, and inclusive design approach for integrating basic accessibility features into newly-built homes. Specifically, the legislation requires all newly-built single family homes receiving federal funds to meet three specific accessibility standards: at least one accessible, or "zero step," entrance into the home; 32" clearance doorways on the main level; and one wheelchair accessible bathroom.**

**"I applaud the PVA for supporting H.R. 2353 and will work with the organization and advocates across the country to pass the visitability bill. By making new homes accessible, we guarantee that many seniors and disabled veterans can age at home instead of moving into expensive facilities. This will save taxpayer money and it will help improve the quality of life of our senior citizens," Schakowsky said.**

**Schakowsky concluded her meeting with PVA members by stating, "We must take care**

**of our veterans today so that future generations of committed men and women will continue to serve in our military. That is why I have joined with my colleagues in trying to eliminate the disabled veterans' tax where a military retiree's disability check is cut dollar for dollar against their pension check. It is why I have cosponsored the bill to make veterans' health care mandatory funding rather than leaving it at the discretion of the Administration and Congresses. If the President can afford to go to war, then he better propose a budget that can afford to pay for our veterans of war."**